

# Phoenix takes 1st steps on '620' future

## Staff to develop hiking trails; residents rejoice over land purchase

By Cathryn Creno  
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Phoenix city staffers will soon start developing desert hiking trails on an \$18 million 247-acre piece of land purchased by the city at a state trust land auction this week.

On Thursday, Phoenix was the lone bidder for the north section of the South Mountain 620, the last major piece of land available to be master-planned and built in Ahwatukee Foothills.

The city has plans to build a city park, a library and a fire station on the land, northwest of Chandler Boulevard and 19th Avenue, although work on those projects won't start soon.

About 30 people, many of whom were Phoenix and Arizona State Land Department staff who had worked for more than a decade on the 620 project, attended the auction.

City Councilman Sal DiCiccio called out the winning bid. The land will be purchased with revenues from bonds approved by Phoenix voters in 2001 and

2006.

DiCiccio said that while Phoenix plans to develop a 40- to 60-acre community park and add a few buildings to the area, it primarily will remain a vast sweep of open space.

More than 100 acres will remain an undeveloped part of the Phoenix Mountains Preserve, he said.

"It will be a park where kids can run and still see South Mountain in the background," DiCiccio said.

Laurel Arndt, an Ahwatukee Foothills Village Planning Committee member, had tears in her eyes after the auction. She and other community residents had pushed for years to preserve the section of the 620 closest to South Mountain.

"Our biggest fear was that the land the city just purchased would be developed (by a private builder) in a way that was not environmentally conscious," she said.

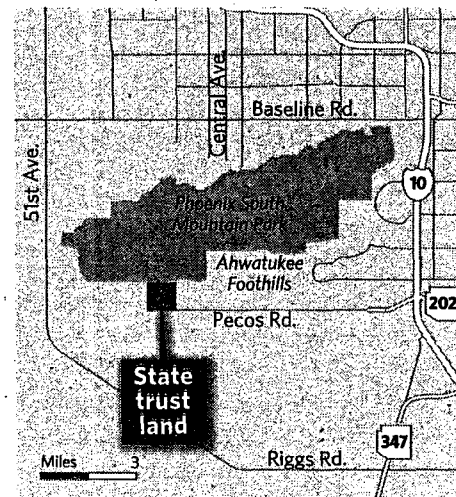
Laura Bell, a member of the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Board and Ahwatukee resident since 1999, said she also is thrilled with city purchase.

"It is the last bit of land we have in Ahwatukee, and we want to make sure that it is planned really well," she said.

Kathryn Reichert, deputy director of the Phoenix Parks and Recreation Department, said city staff will start as soon as next week to line up volunteers to help build trails along old mining roads near

### Phoenix to bid on land for park and preserve

Phoenix is poised to purchase 246 acres of pristine state trust land for a city park and desert preserve.



19th Avenue and Chandler Boulevard. Right now, few hikers use the 620 because, until Thursday, the state Land Department required permits to walk here.

Arizona State Land Commissioner Mark Winkleman called the purchase "momentous." He noted that city and state officials have worked for more than

a decade to create public-private partnership for developing the 620. The land had gone to auction seven times since 1997, but no one ever bid on it.

"It's been a long, long time coming," Winkleman said.

The Land Department has no timetable for auctioning the remaining 373 acres of state trust land in Ahwatukee, which is bounded by Pecos Road, Chandler Boulevard and 19th and 27th avenues.

In January, the City Council rezoned and reduced the density of the south portion of the 620. The plan allows for 11 acres of commercial development, 11 acres of multifamily housing and 650 to 1,050 single-family residences there.

One development challenge is that the South Mountain 620 falls outside the boundaries of the Tempe Union High School and Kyrene Elementary School districts, which serve much of the rest of Ahwatukee.

Students in the 620 area would be welcome to attend schools in those districts, spokeswomen for Tempe Union and Kyrene said. But they might not be able to attend their neighborhood schools if those facilities are full.

Linda Littell, director of communications for Tempe Union, said changing attendance boundaries is complex legally and might require a public vote.

### BRIEFS

#### Dems, Donuts slated April 15

Democrats & Donuts will host Dr. Jonathan Weisbuch at 8 a.m. April 15 at Fire Station 43 at 4110 E. Chandler Blvd., Ahwatukee Foothills, for a discussion on the single payer healthcare bill, HR 676,

of immigration or citizenship status while applying for a job in a free workshop Tuesday at Cesar Chavez Library, 3635 W. Baseline Road.

Presented by the city Equal Opportunity Department, the workshop will run from 2 to 4 p.m. and give a basic overview of laws prohibiting citizenship and immigration discrimination.

contracting process by attending a free workshop, "Doing Business with Government Entities," Wednesday night at Phoenix City Hall, 200 W. Washington St., in Assembly Rooms A, B and C.

Topics include how to become a registered vendor and get added to a bidders list, how procurement processes differ from one government entity to another a

Wednesday afternoon at Burton Barr Central Library, 1221 N. Central Ave.

The workshop is from 1 to 4 p.m. and offers ADRE-authorized fair housing relicensing credit and is presented with the Southwest Fair Housing Council.

Sponsored by the Phoenix Equal Opportunity Department, the workshop will explain housing discrimination in